



*Association of Professional  
Flight Attendants*

*Representing the Flight Attendants of American Airlines*

July 28, 2017

Ms. Lorenda Ward  
Investigator-in-Charge  
Office of Aviation Safety  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 E. L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, DC 20594

RE: Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) Party Submission regarding the American Airlines Flight 383 Uncontained Engine Failure and Subsequent Fire; October 28, 2016; Chicago, Illinois – DCA17FA021

Dear Ms. Ward:

I am pleased to offer this submission on behalf of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants. I want to thank you and your staff for the outstanding work you performed. Even though this was my first experience as a Party Coordinator, your leadership, clarity of purpose and guidance made the process understandable, and I am proud of the work that all party participants contributed. The "Party Process" is truly a unique aspect of National Transportation Safety Board investigations, and it serves as the foundation of the outstanding reputation that your agency maintains.

Thank you again for the good work you did on this accident.

Sincerely,



Noelle Weiler  
Party Coordinator  
Association of Professional Flight Attendants

cc: Representative, Federal Aviation Administration  
Party Coordinator, Allied Pilots Association  
Party Coordinator, Association of Professional Flight Attendants  
Party Coordinator, Transport Workers Union  
Party Coordinator, The Boeing Company  
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**ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FLIGHT ATTENDANTS SUBMISSION  
REGARDING AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 383 UNCONTAINED ENGINE  
FAILURE AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE; OCTOBER 28, 2016; CHICAGO, ILLINOIS –  
DCA17FA021**

**SUMMARY**

On October 28, 2016, at about 1432 CDT, American Airlines flight number 383, a Boeing 767-300, N345An, powered by two General Electric CF6-80C2B6 turbofan engines, experienced a right engine uncontained failure and subsequent fire during the takeoff ground roll at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Chicago, Illinois. The flightcrew aborted the takeoff, stopped the aircraft, and an emergency evacuation was conducted.

Of the 161 passengers and 9 crew members onboard, one passenger received serious injuries during the evacuation and the airplane was substantially damaged as a result of the fire. The flight was operating under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 121 as a domestic scheduled passenger flight to Miami International Airport (MIA), Miami, Florida.

*The Crew*

The crew consisted of a captain, first officer (FO), and seven flight attendants. The seven flight attendants were experienced, well qualified, well trained, and all received recurrent training each year.

*Flight Attendant Positions and Experience*

Flight 383 was operated with 7 flight attendants. The table below provides the flight attendant position, jumpseat location, flight attendant initial new hire date and last recurrent training date.

<b>FA Position</b>	<b>Jumpseat Location</b>	<b>Initial New Hire Date</b>	<b>Last Recurrent Training Date</b>
#1 - Lead	1L	April 1988	April 2016
#2	4L	November 1998	November 2015
#3	4R	November 2014	November 2015
#4	2R	July 1991	March 2016
#5	1R	October 1989	July 2016
#6	2L Fwd Facing	April 1984	April 2016
#7	2L Aft Facing	November 1989	October 2016

**Table 1 - Flight attendant position, location and training dates.**

(Please see Figure 1, page 3 of the NTSB's Survival Factors Group Chairman's report for the cabin configuration of the accident airplane.)

*The Event*

According to flight attendant interviews, the preflight and boarding activities were normal and flight attendants had taken their seats. During the rollout and just before the rejected takeoff, the lead flight attendant reported hearing a noise and felt the airplane shudder and shake. He initially thought the aircraft had blown a tire and he stood up expecting to hear a call from the cockpit. Passengers, however, immediately started rushing the 1L door. The flight attendant stated he saw a smoky haze starting to fill the cabin, and he made the decision to initiate an evacuation at the 1L door.

A second flight attendant also heard the “bang” but mentioned she saw flames and fire from about rows 28 – 32 trailing aft to the 4R door. Passengers began screaming, left their seats and rushed to the exits while the plane was still moving. Once the aircraft stopped, the flight attendant also made the decision to evacuate.

A number of flight attendants indicated that a few passengers ignored repeated instructions and attempted to evacuate with their carryon luggage.

#### *Airplane Interphone*

After the airplane came to a stop, flight attendant #1 tried to reach the cockpit but was unable to do so. Flight attendant #2 picked up the interphone when she saw flames coming from the right wing to call the captain to request that he shut down the engines. Unfortunately, the Boeing 767 had a different dialing protocol than the one she was used to using.

The interphone on American Airlines’ airplanes are different across the fleet. The classic interphone has a key pad that has 4 keys to call locations around the airplane. One of the keys is orange which when pressed calls all stations on the airplane. It should be noted that the new interphone, not installed on any training simulators, has a key pad that resembles a telephone key pad with a menu of 10 different options. The differences in the handsets and how they were used was problematic in the emergency situation.

(Please see Figure 10, page 20 of the NTSB’s Survival Factors Group Chairman’s report for the jumpseat interphone locations.)

#### *Evacuation*

Flight data recorder (FDR) information showed that between 8 and 12 seconds after the airplane came to a stop the left overwing exit door opened, following approximately 17 seconds later by the forward left door, and then approximately 4 seconds later by the forward right door.

Passengers started to rush to exit door areas before the airplane came to a stop because of visible fire and smoke. Passengers were screaming and climbing over middle seats, requesting that the exit doors be opened so they could exit the airplane. The evacuation on flight attendant initiative before the engines were shut down took place because the cabin began to fill with smoke and fire was visible. The flight attendants acted within their authority and in the best interests of the passengers.

Flight attendants repeatedly told passengers to not take anything with them. Unfortunately, this request was ignored by some. A flight attendant had an altercation with a male passenger when he refused to drop a bag he wanted to take with him. In another instance, a woman came to her evacuation area with a large bag and would not comply with the flight attendant’s instruction that she leave the bag. After a short struggle, the flight attendant decided the woman was causing a delay in the evacuation and instructed her to exit the airplane with the bag.

Flight attendants also blocked certain exits and redirected passengers to other exits because of visible fire.

Following the evacuation, flight attendant #1 took a head count of crew while ground emergency personnel lined up the passengers to get a total count.

### *Crew Resource Management*

This accident shows the importance of crew resource management. Flight attendant interviews show that there was little, if any, communication with the cockpit crew before the flight.

Although most stated they did receive crew resource management training, it should be noted that flight attendants and pilots are trained on this issue separately – not together.

### *Issues to be Addressed*

1. Interphone -- The interphone on American Airlines' airplanes are different across the fleet. One style of interphone should be installed with a universal dialing system to reach the cockpit. Until that is addressed, placards with bold lettering should be installed at all interphone stations with clear instructions on dialing the cockpit.
2. Passenger overhead storage – There should be further passenger education about the dangers of attempting to evacuate with luggage. The installation of an overhead bin locking system to block passenger removal of items in the overhead bin during taxi, takeoff, landing or evacuation should be studied by the airline community.
3. Evacuation assistants – It is standard procedure that prior to sending passengers down an evacuation slide or out of an exit without a slide, that American Airlines flight attendants assign at least one passenger assistant to aid other passengers in the evacuation. No assigned assistants remained at their post after evacuating the aircraft. Flight attendant crew size should be reviewed in light of this shortcoming.

Airport emergency response personnel and ground personnel should be trained to immediately assist in the evacuation at airports in the likelihood the passenger assistants are not in position and the evacuation is still in progress.

4. Crew resource management – Because there is a lack of crew continuity from one leg to the next, the need to reinforce crew resource management is more important than ever. Establishing good crew communication should begin at the onset of each leg (with crew change) with a thorough crew briefing. The briefing should be mandatory for *all* working crew members and more robust in the content covered. The airline should emphasize the importance of this briefing by allowing sufficient time at the start of each leg with crew change and by compensating the crewmembers for their time.
5. Evacuation of emotional support animals – With more and more emotional support animals flying in the passenger cabin, there should be training on the safest method with regard to how to evacuate with a support animal or cabin pet in a kennel. We recommend an FAA/industry working group be established to examine this issue.

APFA would again like to praise the actions of the flight attendants and cockpit crew on their very capable and professional response to this event. Flight attendants are increasingly seen as “first responders,” and the outstanding behavior of the seven flight attendant crew members is testimony to their professionalism and their courage.